

# Study Group Tips:



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Many find that they can study more effectively and efficiently with a team. Study groups help engage with specific course content and prepare for exams and other significant assessments. Active engagement with course content results in deeper learning, increased motivation, greater self and group confidence, and academic success. The other added benefits include:

- improvement in your interpersonal and team skills;
- creation of a beneficial support system;
- opportunity to share different perspectives;
- cover/review more course material;
- increase understanding of course content and/or fill in learning gaps, and
- make learning more interactive and fun.

## Tips for Creating and Maintaining a Successful Study Group

- Ensure that the team members share mutual goals and expectations.
  - Invite group members who demonstrate regular class attendance and come prepared to learn. These characteristics, plus active participation, are also crucial to group success.
  - While humans, in general, tend to surround themselves with those who are most like themselves. Don't exclude a potential member who demonstrates key characteristics but has a different perspective or approach to learning.
  - Ensure everyone is accountable for agreed-upon deliverables (e.g., readings, test prep questions, notes, or outlines).
- Limit the study group to 4 or 5 members. Exceeding this number increases the likelihood of socializing too much, and less than this reduces efficiency and the ability to cover course content adequately.
- Before each study group session, set an agenda to keep the group focused. Select a group member to manage the session and keep the group on track.

- Meet regularly.
  - Duration: Study group sessions should average between 1.5 to 2 hours. This is a good balance of time that reduces the possibility of socializing too much and the need to rush through the material.
  - Location: Choose a study environment that offers minimal distractions and allows members to communicate effectively.
  - Frequency: Try to meet at the same time each week, so sessions become a part of each member's regular schedule.
- Proper preparation and participation are essential.
  - Ensure that each member understands their responsibilities for each session.
    - Complete relevant readings, complete and review notes, and identify key points.
  - Every member of the group is expected to be engaged and actively participate in each session.
    - Each member should instruct the group on the material or topic they are assigned for each session and follow, if appropriate, with some test prep questions. This increases the retention of information and assessment of knowledge.

**A Note of Caution:**

- If the group is not benefitting your academic goals or success, don't be afraid to walk away. Here are a few reasons to separate yourself or an individual from the study group:
  - Study sessions are no longer productive.
  - A member is no longer accountable for their assignments (e.g., comes unprepared or fails to participate).
  - It is impacting your personal study time, confidence or test preparation.
- As a group, decide on the consequences for not adhering study group rules in advance.

Source:

Downing, Skip. On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. Boston, MA. 2014.